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ABSTRACT

The findings of 22 significant and accessible studies of community involvement in school board policy formation, selected from over 130 relevant studies, are analyzed in this report to provide lay activists with information that could prove useful in efforts to influence policy-making. This information is organized in a question-and-answer format, with relevant findings cited as supporting evidence for the answers provided to specific questions in the following broad categories: (1) do administrators follow school board mandates? (2) do school boards follow voters' wishes? (3) is electoral support the major source of power? (4) how is board responsiveness measured? (5) does board organization affect responsiveness? (6) do all community interests have equal impact? (7) are boards equally responsive on all issues? and (8) are boards equally responsive to all influencing strategies? The responses are designed to clarify when, why, and how to lobby. The report also provides a description of the study sample analyzed, a brief history of the literature, and a review of the implications of the findings. A bibliography lists 62 documents, citing ERIC document number where appropriate. (PGD)

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FINAL DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARDS AND THE COMMUNITIES THEY REPRESENT: AN INVENTORY OF THE RESEARCH

JUNE 1984

NIE Grant #80-0171, Project No. 01165

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ABSTRACT

"School Boards and the Communities They Represent" is a survey and propositional inventory of the research evidence on what "actionable" factors are associated with differences in citizen access to local school board policymaking. Designed to make the accumulated findings in the research accessible to lay audiences, it inventories more than 62 propositions based on research evidence contained in 22 major studies, which shed light on the following questions: Do administrators follow the mandates of legislators, a.k.a. the school board? Do those "legislators" follow the instructions of their constituents, and is responsiveness to community preferences the norm of policymaking? What makes a difference for responsiveness? Does it matter how boards are elected? Is there more responsiveness to some kinds of community interest groups rather than others? Are boards more responsive on some kinds of issues? Are some ways of approaching the board likely to be more successful than others? The focus is on that evidence which informs the citizen wishing to "lobby" a board about how policy is made in order to make the general policymaking process more responsive.

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Ross Zerchykov, Vice President and Director of Research at the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE), is the Principal Author of this Report. Zerchykov has a political science background and has most recently authored both a review of the literature and a managers' handbook on the politics of school retrenchment, and has been published in Education and Urban Society, on the "politics of closing schools."

No product is ever written in a vacuum. Several individuals helped by discussing and reacting to the early designs and plans for this report.

One such individual was William L. Boyd, of Pennsylvania State University, who has thought more deeply and for a longer time on this issue than most. His ability to keep pointing to the non-obvious implications of research on school politics was always thought provoking. Michael Berger, of Peabody College at Vanderbilt University, provided advice and caveats about the "method" of inventorying evidence from disparate studies. Joy E. Sovde, former head of the South Carolina Citizens' Coalition for Schools, provided a layperson, activist perspective to the early planning drafts and concept papers leading to our effort. A similar early reaction to our early designs and assumptions which encouraged some and corrected others was provided by Ruth McDonald, then in the Schools and Society Program at the Education Development Center of Newton (Massachusetts). As an educational researcher, citizen activist, and school board member, she provided a unique mix of perspectives.

Any errors of fact or interpretation, however, remain the

responsibility of the listed author.

Owen Heleen provided copy editing and proofreading for this final draft. Carol Ribadeneyra typed earlier drafts. Final production typing was done by W. Dana Rudolph, Office Manager at the Institute for Responsive Education.

FOREWARD

by Don Davies
President
Institute for Responsive Education

This Report is one of the most important and controversial publications of the Institute for Responsive Education (IRE). It is important because it deals with the school board, the most numerous and undervalued entry in America's stock of political institutions. America's school boards have a high potential for the exercise of grassroots political democracy, and yet are widely misunderstood and criticized by citizens and often disdained by scholars.

The information in this Report is designed to help those citizen activists who wish to have school boards which are more responsive to community interests and which correspond more fully to the civics textbook concepts of the management of civic affairs -- policies set by citizens with implementation of those policies by managers responsible to citizen boards.

Some of the implications of that information, however, may surprise citizens. The evidence we have surveyed leads to the conclusion that the Report is controversial because it concludes that the democratic potential of school boards can best be realized if they become more not less political, and if citizens act so as to elect politically ambitious members, and if their members have their base in a special interest constituency rather than in a vision of an objective public interest. The research evidence we have looked at confirms Joseph Schlesinger's comment that "no more irresponsible government is imaginable than one of high-minded men [or women] unconcerned for their political futures."

This Report is part of the Institute for Responsive Education's continuing effort to "broker" the knowledge acquired by specialists to the larger audience of concerned laypeople.

The Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) is a private, non-profit national research, policy analysis and technical

assistance organization with an eleven-year history of conducting studies on and disseminating information about community involvement in school decisionmaking. Although private and independent, IRE is housed at Boston University.

Founded on the premises that citizen participation is an essential ingredient in school improvement and that citizens' access to information is indispensable for effective participation, IRE has, throughout its history, produced more than 30 reports, handbooks, bibliographies and other publications.

IRE has been involved in many facets of citizen participation which include school-community councils, citizen roles in educational collective bargaining, Federal and state policies affecting citizen participation, the role of citizen-initiated organizations, declining enrollment, and citizen action research for school improvement.

IRE houses an ongoing Clearinghouse on Youth and Citizen Participation which contains materials on more than 250 topics about school-community relations and descriptions of more than 1,500 local Youth Participation programs nationwide. IRE also publishes a twice-yearly newsjournal, Citizen Action in Education (CAE).

ONE. INTROUCTION: WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT AND WHO IS IT FOR?

INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE AND THE PRACTICE OF CITIZENSHIP

This report is part of the Institute for Responsive Education's publications program on the politics of education. This program is intended to increase public understanding about issues of educational policymaking through the dissemination of research knowledge to lay audiences.

WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT?

The focus of this report is on research evidence about the representative function of local school boards: To what extent, and how, are community interests consulted and given a hearing as boards make local policies? Evidence about this representative function comes from more than two decades of scholarly work on school governance, making up what is now commonly known as the "politics-of-education" literature.

This report is a result of a highly selective survey of that literature, identifying those research findings which illuminate how the "community"* has more or less of different kinds of access to local school board policymaking. More specifically, this report examines the "actionable" factors that are associated with documented differences in the extent to which boards consult with, hear, and "respond to" community interests. To this, end we offer an inventory of current (through May of 1983) and publicly accessible research findings on the correlates of school boards' responsiveness to the community.

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* The term "community" (or public) is defined throughout as any non-school employee constituent or constituency group.

WHO THIS REPORT IS FOR

The aim is to make the accumulated and relevant findings in the research literature accessible to lay audiences, especially the citizen or citizens' group wishing to influence local boards to adopt policies which make decisionmaking and policy setting more accessible and more responsive to the public.

WHAT THIS REPORT CONTAINS

Content is determined by the practical information needs of the target audience. It also reflects some real differences in the information and knowledge needs of civic activists as opposed to scholars and/or bibliographers.

The most important difference is that while the scholar is interested in all of the factors associated with differences in responsiveness, the civic activist is only concerned with those factors that can be affected by civic action. For example, findings correlating differences in board responsiveness to what are often called "ecological variables" -- e.g. community size, wealth, power structure, or social heterogeneity -- figure prominently in the literature, in part because of their powerful statistical effect in multi-variate analysis. These ecological factors have much less import for the civic activist. Short of changing residency, there is very little that one can do about "community type." Hence, our inventory includes findings about "ecology" only when they have practical applicability for citizens.

What are these practical, more actionable correlates of responsiveness? Consider the general knowledge needs of a citizen wishing to "lobby" a board about how policy is made in order to make the general policymaking process more responsive. He or she would need to know:

- When to lobby? That is, what kinds of objective facts establish whether the process is responsive?
- What to lobby for? That is, what kinds of structural arrangements, which can be created through

legislation, regulation, or charter reform, are most often associated with more responsiveness?

- How to lobby? That is, what are the obstacles, the opportunities, and the likely success of different strategies of civic action in approaching school boards?

With these knowledge needs in mind, we approached the research literature for guidance in a less than perfect world which, as the research evidence shows, falls short of the following civics textbook ideal of policymaking: "...the public elects a school board to make policy. The board appoints a superintendent to administer policy. Thus administrators follow the mandates of legislators who follow the instructions of their constituents. The major source of power is electoral support and the norm of policymaking is responsiveness to public demands and preferences" (Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a:11).

The fact this is the ideal, official version of how school policy is made is what makes civic action possible. Its norms, paraphrased as questions about fact, and the practical information needs of our would-be citizen lobbyist provide the framework for this Report.

In it, we approach the research literature as a source of evidence which can provide answers to the following more specific questions:

(1) Do administrators follow the mandates of legislators?

(2) Do legislators follow the instructions of their constituents, and is responsiveness to public demands and preferences the norm of policymaking?

(3) Is electoral support the major source of power?

(4) How can one tell if a board is responsive?

(5) Does it make a difference how boards are organized?

(6) Are boards more likely to be more responsive to some kinds of community interests rather than others?

(7) Are boards likely to be more responsive on some kinds of issues rather than on others?

(8) Are boards more likely to be more responsive to different strategies of respresenting community interests?

Questions 1-3 focus on the extent to which the local policymaking process conforms to the democratic norms embodied in the civics textbook ideal. They also collect and introduce the lay reader to the major studies in the politics of education literature.

Question 4 addresses the "when-to-lobby" issue and inventories the different ways in which the notion of responsiveness has been defined and measured in the literature thus pinpointing that part of the literature containing findings which can show "what makes a difference" in board responsiveness.

Questions 5-8 focus on evidence about what may make a difference. More specifically:

Question 5 addresses the "what-to-lobby-for" issue. It focuses on that research evidence which looks at structural variables such as board size, electoral arrangements, and other factors subject to change by legislation or charter reform.

Questions 6-8 address the "how-to-lobby" issue. They identify and inventory evidence relating types of issues, types of interests and groups, and types of strategies to differences in responsiveness.

HOW THIS REPORT IS ORGANIZED

Its contents are organized in a question and answer format. That format reflects the fact that this is a selective survey rather than a comprehensive review of the literature. To pursue the notion of a survey in its literal sense, imagine the eight questions above, and the additional questions they generated, serving as a "survey questionaire." We then "asked" these questions of a "universe" consisting of the research literature on school boards. That universe was identified by the following search procedures.

A computer assisted ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) search yielded 45 references current through June 1993. Of these, 37 were selected because they dealt, directly or indirectly, with evidence on school board responsiveness to

community interests. To this reading list, we added another 30 references retrieved from an earlier search of ERIC current from 1968 - 1976, made possible by an earlier NIE sponsored research project.* This was supplemented by an additional 30 to 40 references culled from citations in the works read in the original two lists. The result was an initial reading list of over 130 references.

Our focus is on contemporary research findings. Our choice of works prior to 1970 literature was selective: we included only those works most often cited and most influential in setting the future course of studies of local school policymaking. We were also selective in only focusing on citing publicly accessible works, i.e., only those that are published and/or are available in paper copy from ERIC.

Applying the "questionnaire" to that universe, we identified a "final sample" of 22 studies which had findings relevant to the issues in that questionnaire. And, as is the case in tallying survey responses, our focus is on the response rather than the respondent. In other words we inventoried findings, not studies. Our focus is on the evidence contained in the literature and not on the literature itself. The overall structure of this report reflects this survey approach.

This introduction has presented the issues guiding the survey.

The "Background" immediately following describes the "sample" as well as providing a brief layperson oriented introduction and history of the research literature on school governance.

Sections Three and Four present the survey "responses," i.e., the findings which provide answers to the eight questions

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*Citizens Organizations: A Study of Citizen Participation in Educational Decisionmaking, NIE 400 76-0115.

guiding our survey.

A final section, "What It All Means," discusses the implications of those findings.

TWO: THE DEBATE ABOUT WHO GOVERNS

INTRODUCTION

This section inventories studies rather than findings and conclusions.

It inventories those studies whose contents -- insights, concepts and measurements, and findings and conclusions -- that provide clues to answering the seven questions which provide the foci and the organizational framework of this Report. As such it provides a layperson's overview of the key studies which will be cited and often repeatedly cited in the subsequent sections of this Report.

Those studies come out of what has come to be called the "politics-of-education" literature, a literature unified by repeated investigations into the question of "who (really) governs" American local school systems. The literature has been shaped, especially since the early 1970's, by a debate over the meaning of steadily accumulating evidence that it is the professionals, not the public, who <u>really</u> (or appear to) govern public schools. It is the latter debate which has yielded insights, concepts and data most relevant to the present focus on how, whether and under what conditions school boards are responsive to the communities they represent.

THE ISSUES: A COINCIDENCE OF SCHOLARLY AND CITIZEN CONCERN

The issue for citizens is access to policymaking that determines what happens to their children in school and/or how their tax money is spent.

The issue for scholars is: to what extent does school board policymaking adhere to the norm of democratic governance, and whether in light of factual answers to that question we should re-examine the practice of school governance, or our assumptions about what constitutes correct, i.e., democratic practice.

At the very least, democratic pratice requires that there be

legislative supremacy, i.e., public officials, elected and responsible to the public, make policy; appointed administrators carry it out.

It is this norm that justifies the existence of school boards. It also justifies citizen participation and access. American local practice appears to provide ample access: PTO's, Advisory Committees and community task forces of various kinds are ubiquitous.

Citizens join such groups for a variety of reasons. Our focus is on what Robert H. Salisbury (1980) and others have called "instrumental participation": namely, participation intended to influence policy. When citizens join such sub-district level groups such as Advisory Committees, etc., in order to pursue instrumental interests, or when their work on such groups leads them to raise <u>policy</u> issues, they are sometimes told something like, "Yes, you may be right. It is a serious problem. But this issue is a districtwide policy matter, subject to school board determination."

The not so implicit message is "this issue is not to be discussed here and now." Many citizens are put off by this response, seeing it as a dilatory tactic and attributing it to either bureaucratic inertia or bureaucratic intransigence.

On its face, however, the rule "subject to board determination" is eminently democratic. It invokes the principle of legislative supremacy, and the civics textbook model of school governance. Under the rules of the game implied by the civics textbook model, citizens are, of course, free to "go to the board" and petition, a.k.a. "lobby" their public officials.

As advocates of civic participation, the Institute for Responsive Education, which is publishing this Report, has encouraged citizens to invoke the civics textbook model and go to the board. Yet, we have repeatedly found some resistance to this advice. Even some of the most veteran activists seem to see the board and its meeting as alien territory. The extent of this alienation is reflected in public opinion poll evidence, especially the series by the National School Boards Association,

"The People Look At Their School Boards," which show that the public, in general, has little knowledge and few contacts with their local boards of education and in many cases is not even sure of what they do.

"TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION": THE 1974 ZEIGLER STUDY

The most comprehensive, still, study of school boards (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974), contained findings suggesting that this alienation and absence of interaction may have a rational basis, based on a reasonable calculation of the costs and benefits of "going to the board." Analyzing survey data from a nationwide sample of 83 school districts (with interviews from 541 school board members, 81 superintendents, and a sample of the public in each district), the study found that boards do not exercise legislative supremacy in policymaking, and it concluded, somewhat dramatically, that boards "should either govern or be abolished" (p. 254), since, generally, boards do not govern, they merely legitimate the policy recommendations of superintendents, and "...rather than being representatives <u>of</u> the community, boards are more likely to be spokesmen <u>for</u> the superintendent <u>to</u> the community." (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974:250.)

In a 1973 journal article previewing and explicating the findings of the 1974 study, Zeigler argued that the present system amounted to "taxation without representation" (Zeigler, 1973:41) and proposed a series of remedies, most notably charter reforms involving neighborhood based rather than at-large, election district, and partisan or slate elections with proportional representation.

If Zeigler's interpretations are correct, then "instrumental" participants are caught in a Catch-22: where they have access (in sub-district or higher level contacts with administrative officials) they are out of order (because of the Principle of Legislative Supremacy); where they are in order (at the board), there appears to be little access or chance of making a difference.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON WHO GOVERNS

This 1974 study set a benchmark in the politics of education literature. Its interpretations of the facts found did not go unchallenged in the subsequent literature. Nor were its findings and foci unprecedented. The 1974 Zeigler study was a culmination of a steadily growing and coinciding stream of literature showing a growing set of misgivings about the impact of the early 20th century Progressive Reform Movement in school governance.

PROGRESSIVE REFORM: TAKING THE POLITICS OUT OF EDUCATION

The Progressive Reform Movement in school governance was part of a general movement to clean up some of the worst excesses of Jacksonian democracy -- e.g., patronage, political machines -- in municipal government. Its main intent was to take the politics out of education, thereby putting school governance on a more rational, honest foundation, with principles of sound management, honesty, efficiency, and professionalism. The movement accomplished this intent through a series of structural, charter reforms which served to shield schools and school boards from the pressures of special interest and machine politics. These included:

(1) reducing the size of boards;

(2) replacing neighborhood based constituency election districts with at-large electoral arrangements, in which candidates ran district-wide in often larger consolidated districts;

(3) making school board elections non-partisan and often scheduling them at different times from regular elections; and

(4) in some cases, redrawing district lines so that they are not coterminous with other political boundaries.

In its own terms, the Movement succeeded. It took the politics out of education, at least the overt, partisan, parochial neighborhood-based machine politics. In so doing, it redefined the function of school boards, and, hence, it redefined the role of board members. Boards were to limit their attention

to general policy and stop meddling in administrative details. Ellwood P. Cubberly, for example, an influential spokesman for the Progressive Reform Movement, and not coincidentally one of the founders of modern "scientific" school administration, argued that "...if the school board confines itself to its proper work, an hour a week will transact all of the school business which boards should handle. There is no more need for speeches and oratory in the conduct of a school system than there would be in the conduct of a national bank" (Cubberly, 1914, cited in Boyd, 1976:543). The proper conduct, sans oratory and politicking, required also that board members act as the guardians, the trustees, of an "objective" public interest, rather than as delegates or representatives of "special" community interests.

COMMUNITY POWER STUDIES AND THE HIDDEN POLITICS OF EDUCATION

Almost as soon as the fruits of reform began to be realized, community power studies, from the 1930's onwards up to the 1970's, began to accumulate evidence that the Progressive Reform Movement was only partially successful in insulating education from politics (e.g., in chronological order: Counts, 1927; Counts, 1928; Hollingshead, 1949; Warner, 1949; Goldhammer, 1955; Vidich and Rensman, 1958).

The main legacy of these studies is three-fold: (i) a demonstration that rescuing school boards from the clutches of special political interest did not thereby make them (the boards) apolitical and neutral, rather all that occurred was a shift of power from the visible political (party and machine) elites, to the more invisible social and economic elites; (ii) an emphasis on the social backgrounds of who became board members, and their "social distance" from the majority of the community; and (iii) a search for the "real" power, behind the apparent power, in public policy.

The second theme was taken up by the civil rights and community control activists, scholars and critics of the 1960's, who argued that the "social distance" or the lack of demographic

fit between the socio-economic composition of the board and the resident (or pupil) populations of the school district was a problem in its own right (e.g., Lyke, 1964; Carver, 1968; Gittell and Hollander, 1968).

GROWING EVIDENCE OF PROFESSIONAL DOMINATION

The third theme -- the search for the "real" power behind the apparent power, became a powerful strand in the contemporary politics of education literature. Somewhat ironically, this strand was initiated by a criticism and revision of the first theme: the search for the socio-economic powers behind the formal power of school boards.

The focus on professional domination has its origins, in Charters' seminal (1953) essay which was offered, in part, as a critique of the community power studies. That critique raised two points. First, the search for hidden power behind apparent power can lead to infinite regress and into the imputing of power to shadowy, empirically unverifiable sources. Secondly, this search is as unnecessary as it is chimerical, since, in fact, school boards do not make much policy anyway; they mostly ratify the policy initiatives of superintendents. There was, therefore, no need for further searches into the hidden wellsprings of community power. The real power was apparent and lay with the superintendent and his staff.

Charters' main point that the community power approach needs to be balanced by an appreciation of both community (outside) and professionally (internal) derived policy cues was well taken and influenced a growing set of investigations into board superintendent relations.

These investigations, which preceeded, coincided with and provided subsequent support to the main findings of the Zeigler, Jennings and Peak study included:

(1) Detailed single case studies such as Hines' (1951) study of the history of board-superintendent relationships in Oregon; and Smoley's (1965) exhaustive 7-year case study of 2,300 "decisions" made by the Baltimore Board of School Commissioners.

(2) Surveys of board members and superintendents (and, sometimes the public), looking for patterns of attitudes and self-reported behaviors which clarify superintendent-board relationships (e.g., Gross, et al, 1958 -- for 105 Massachusetts superintendents, and Lipham, et al. and Rossmiller, 1967). Although far more limited in scope and in conceptual foci, such surveys provided earlier role models for the 1974 Zeigler survey study. This kind of work continued into the 1970's (e.g., Blanchard, 1974 -- for Kentucky, and Blanchard, et al., 1977 -- for a sample of over 1,000 board members from six Southern states).

(3) McCarty and Ramsey (1970) continued with the community power approach, albeit in a more sophisticated study (51 communities in the Midwest and Northeast) which related differences in community power structures to differences in board-superintendent relations. Their comparative approach, different from the single case studies of Warner (1949) or Vidich and Bensman (1958), followed the work of Kimbrough (1964).

(4) Meanwhile, community conflict studies, unlike the more static community power studies, looked at board-superintendent relations in situ, in the context of actual decisionmaking and concepts of political resources and resource mobilization in an analysis of how conflict is resolved into policy and in consequence, who gets what and how (e.g., Coleman, 19--; Martin, 1963; Minar, 1966; Steinberg, 1966). Such studies identified and traced the ebb and flow of the superintendents' technical expertise as a political resource, and found that one reason for the episodic, often oppositional nature of citizen participation was the lack of regular channels for school board and community interaction (e.g., Martin, 1963; Steinberg, 1971).

(5) Finally, a number of studies provided close-up analyses of the "culture" of school board decisionmaking, giving concrete descriptions of what the "trustee" role orientation and deference professional expertise actually "looks like" as boards go about their business. These descriptions also enriched the vocabulary for analyzing and investigating school boards.

The new vocabulary came from other fields such as anthropology and organizational analyses. Iannacone and Lutz (1970, see also Lutz, 1976) adapted Becker's (1970) dichotomy of "sacred" vs. "secular" communities to describe culture of board decisionmaking. "Sacred" cultures are closed decisionmaking styles, favoring few actors, consensus and public unanimity. "Secular" cultures, on the other hand, operate in public, entertain input from other actors and decide through public votes.

Bailey's (1965) distinction between elite vs. arena councils provided yet another set of concepts with which to describe board decisionmaking. The operational indicators for elite councils dovetail with the definition of sacred decisionmaking cultures. Hence, it is possible to characterize boards along a continuum from "elite-sacred" to "arena-secular" (Lutz, 1976).

Coinciding with what survey data studies (e.g., Gross, op cit, and others) revealed with respect to board member role definitions, it was found that the "norm" was for an elite-sacred style (Lutz, 1975), and that even when boards acted as secular-arena council, they thought that they were acting, or should act, as a sacred-elite council (Lutz, and Ghesson, 1976).

The predominance of the "sacred" orientation placed a higher value n professional-technical-"priestly" expertise, thereby providing an arena supportive of the influence of the superintendent and not so coincidentally produced the kind of quiet, apolitical, businesslike meetings envisioned by the Progressive Reformers (Boyd, 1976). Moreover, Vidich and Bensman's (1978) community power study, described how superintendents consciously promoted sacred-elite values. Kerr (1964), in his suburban case studies, provided an in-depth description of the socialization of new board members into the "professional-trustee-elite-sacred" role orientation, nct only by the superintendents but also by their peers and he concluded that the school board is "an agency of legitimation" rather than a policymaking body.

THE 1974 ZEIGLER, JENNINGS AND PEAK STUDY, REVISITED

Kerr's conclusion that the board merely rubber stamps rather than makes policy and similar findings and allegations by community control advocates were based on piecemeal evidence. It was the 83-district, nationwide Zeigler study which brought together and tested, on the widest sample, the growing misgivings about the representative role of school boards. The intent of Zeigler and his colleagues was quite explicitly stated, as testing to what extent practice lived up to the democratic norms which justified the existence of school boards.

Their conclusions, in general, are that: Boards are not legislatively supreme and are not representative and responsive because they don't want to be. They don't want to be because, first, the cultural norms dictate elite rather than arena council behavior. And, second, there is no incentive not to engage in the "elite" council behavior since the legacy of Progressive Reform has meant that boards are insulated from politics and hence protected against pressures to be responsive to constituents.

In this diagnosis, behavior is shaped by attitudes, attitudes are the result of enculturation, and culture is protected and perpetuated by structure, i.e., by all those structural arrangements designed to keep regular politics out of school boards.

The remedy, as presented in Zeigler's (1974) essay, "Creating Responsive Schools," is to re-politicize school governance.

The subsequent history of this topic can be characterized in terms of: challenges to the Zeigler thesis about re-politicization; amendments and exceptions to the generalizations about professional domination; research for alternate avenues of representation and access; and elaborations and refinements to the 1974 Zeigler thesis.

Zeigler's thesis was that political charter reform to, in effect, undo what the Progressive Reformers had accomplished, would change behavior by increasing board member vulnerability. This prescription, and ultimately the interpretation of the findings upon which it was based, was subject to major challenges.

First, Boyd (1976) argued that the prescription went beyond the evidence. The weak connections between unreformed structures and less superintendent dominance, and more contact with community interest groups, and a more delegate-like role orientation, were washed out by the more powerful effects of community type. (See section Four, below, for a more detailed look at the issues and the findings.)

Second, the conclusion that the present system amounts to "taxation without representation" was challenged by claims that the Zeigler study used unrealistic standards and assumptions about representative democracy and that their standards and their research foci ignored alternate routes of representation. For example:

In their 5-district study of whether ideology plays a role in school board elections (they found that it did), Mitchell and Badarak (1977) identified two ways of thinking about democracy, and hence, of judging whether a set of institutions are representative of the public will.

The first, "a voter dissatisfaction theory of democratic control," looks at political processes in order to assess whether or not the values of grassroots citizens find their way into the policies ultimately implemented in school operations" (p. 79). The second is the interest group theory approach "best exemplified in the recent work by Zeigler, et al. (1974), which evaluates political processes in terms of an ideal-type model of 'democracy' which assumes that democratic control is embodied in vigorous and informed competition among conflicting interests" (p. 79). Mitchell and Badarak explain "...the key to the difference between the Zeigler [i.e., interest group theory] and the Iannacone and Lutz [i.e., voter dissatisfaction model] lies

in the latter's emphasis on citizen values or goals for education rather than the mere presence of political competition. The Iannacone-Lutz approach assumes that quiet, noncompetitive elections may be just what large numbers of citizens desire in many cases" (1977:80).

The voter dissatisfaction model is based on Iannacone and Lutz' (1970) in-depth case study of electoral change and its impact on school politics. Inferences from that study were tested and supported by statistical data from 117 other school districts.

The pattern identified by Iannacone and Lutz can be summarized as follows: In the normal course of events, public access is low, and superintendents dominate just as in the Zeigler 1974 findings. Over time, as some public policy preferences fail to be expressed in this normal routine, enough voters get dissatisfied enough to elect new board members. Board turnover results in superintendent turnover. As the new board gets a superintendent more to their liking, the normal routine (elite-sacred decisionmaking style) reasserts itself, and the cycle is repeated. (Section 4.3, below, "Is Electoral Support the Basis of Power?", looks more closely at the evidence on this issue.)

AMENDMENTS AND EXCEPTIONS

As is the case with almost any phenomenon, the more knowledge that is gained, the harder it is to maintain any blanket generalization. This is true with respect to the "who governs" issue.

The exceptions to the rule of professional dominance seem to come in two issue areas: desegregation (Crain, 1968; Kirby, et al., 1973; Petersen, 1976; Rossell, 1975), and retrenchment decisionmaking (Berger, 1982; Boyd, 1982; and Cibulka, 1982).

With respect to desegregation the findings are complex and ambiguous. This appears to be one issue in which little of the existing patterns holds true generally. On desegregation issues boards may not be as deferential to superintendents (Petersen,

1976) but that does not mean that they (the boards) will be more accessible and responsive to community interests (Petersen, 1976; Kirby, et al., 1973).

With respect to retrenchment decisions, e.g., closing schools, eliminating or scaling down programs, the pattern is a little clearer. Boyd's (1982) comparative case study of 15 retrenching suburban school districts found that retrenchment decisions decreased board deference to the technical expertise of superintendents, and that that deference is like "magic", or charisma, once lost it is not easily recovered. Cibulka's (1982) survey of retrenchment decisionmaking in ten large cities showed that school closings increased levels of board-superintendent conflict. Moreover, in one of those cities, the level of board vs. superintendent conflict over school closings increased after it went from at-large to neighborhood based school elections.

ELABORATIONS AND REFINEMENTS: THE ZEIGLER-TUCKER RESPONSIVENESS STUDY

Acknowledging the inherent methodological limitations of survey approaches used in the 1974 Zeigler, et al. study (see Zeigler, Tucker and Wilson, 1977:223-225), Zeigler and his colleagues conducted another and closer look, based this time on on-site observation and documentary, as well as interview survey data, at the question of "who governs." (Zeigler and Tucker, 1978.)*

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* The findings of this study are contained also in Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a.. Page references throughout parts of this report are sometimes from the more detailed 1978 Draft Final Research Report.

The 1978 "Responsiveness" study examined board decisions and patterns of communications for a nine-month period in eleven school districts during the 1974-75 academic year. It collected data on: (i) community preferences, and decisionmaking preferences, via surveys; (ii) on communications (who, said what to whom?) among boards, citizens, and school administrators; (iii) on the decisionmaking processes. Data for (ii) and (iii) consisted of on-site interviews, direct observation of board meetings, and documentary evidence.

We will discuss the specific findings and concepts of this study in more detail as they are cited in answers to our eight questions, addressed in sections Three and Four, below.

For now, the main implications worth noting are two-fold: First, nothing in the "responsiveness" study contradicted or qualified the picture of professional dominance which emerged from the 1974, 83-district Zeigler study (see Zeigler and Tucker, 1980a, for a comparison of the two sets of data). But, secondly, its in-depth look did reveal that responsiveness is not a unitary concept and that in fact school boards and even the same board may be responsive in one sense, but not in another. The many dimensions of a non-unitary concept of responsiveness are discussed in Section Three, below. This latter finding, while it does not settle the debate over who governs, can clarify the terms of the debate.

SUMMARY: THE DEBATE OVER WHO GOVERNS

The general, but far from simple, answer to the question -- who governs American local education -- is as follows: The superintendent governs. In practice, the superintendent's views predominate in school policymaking until and unless he/she gets fired. The latter typically occurs when there is a pronounced turnover occasioned by a hotly contested election. Such "cataclysmic elections" reflect pronounced changes in public opinion about local school policies, changes which reflect and follow upon social change within the community. In between such cataclysmic elections, most of the policy decisions which come

before school boards originate with superintendents. Superintendents not only bring matters up for consideration, they offer advisory opinions as to how these matters should be decided. These opinions are usually accepted with little formal debate and all but unanimity in board decisionmaking. Most board members eschew conflict and debate and see themselves as trustees rather than delegates of the public, and prescribe to the norm that politics should be kept out of education. Community interest groups, therefore, are not routinely consulted and fail to break the superintendent's hegemony over the school board's policy agenda. The general public has less knowledge about board members and board policy than it has about other municipal officials and policies. But the general public has comparatively more trust and confidence in school districts as opposed to other units of government (Federal, state, county, municipal), and more trust in education as opposed to other municipal social services.

Disagreement centers around the import of three "brute" and incontrovertable "facts":

(1) low levels of public involvement in and knowledge of school board policies, coexisting with comparatively high levels of public confidence in school districts as units of government;

(2) superintendents' dominance of boards' policymaking agendas, and their decisive influence over policy outcomes;

(3) the connection between superintendent turnover and board turnover, the latter reflecting broad changes in public opinion (stemming from social changes within the community) about school policies, as expressed through "cataclysmic elections."

But what do these "brute" facts tell us about the relationship between "school boards and the communities they represent," or about the allegation of "taxation without representation?" More precisely, is public quiescence, apart from outbursts in cataclysmic elections, an indicator of ignorance, or apathy, or alienation or lack of actual or perceived access to the well-springs of school policy. Three kinds of ideal-typical answers to this question seem to be consistent with the facts.

Answer No. 1: Because of superintendents' domination of

school policymaking, there is no opportunity for ongoing representation of community interests in the policymaking process. Public quiescence is simply a rational response to this lack of access. Cataclysmic elections are the exceptions which prove the rule, representing pent-up frustration in which the superintendency itself, even the personality of the superintendent, becomes the issue and the only recourse is to "throw the rascals out." The ongoing behavior of sitting school boards is not responsive to community interests (e.g., Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; Zeigler and Tucker, 1978 and 1980a; and Gittell, 1979).

Answer No. 2: Despite superintendents' decisive influence on school board policies and policymaking, boards are not really dominated by superintendents. Boards get to pick their own superintendents; they hold his/her contract, and they pick superintendents with whom they agree. Both the board and superintendent are (like political scientists) aware of the possibility of cataclysmic elections. This awareness leads, via "the law of anticipated reactions," the superintendent to propose, and the school board to approve, only those policies which will meet with public approval, or at the very least, public non-opposition. Hence, despite the fact that community interests are not consulted about or involved in decisionmaking that decisionmaking is responsive to community interests as those interests are perceived by both superintendents and boards wishing to hold on to their office (e.g., Iannacone and Lutz, 1970).

Answer No. 3: Although it seems as if superintendents hold decisive influence over school policymaking, that influence is freely granted. Superintendents are dominant because boards want and expect them to be dominant. Those expectations stem from a shared ideology as to how schools should be run. And, in any case, the superintendents' proposals are usually triumphant because they seem reasonable and reflect the technocratic norms shared by the superintendent, the school board, and the majority of the population in a majority of the nation's 16,000 plus

school districts most, of which happen to be homogeneous. Hence, school boards may repeatedly defer to superintendents without, each time, consulting other community interests. But in so doing, the school boards are being responsive because they reflect community values (e.g., Boyd, 1976).

Which answer sounds more persuasive depends, in part, on whether being responsive means being merely solicitous and sensitive to constituents' preferences, or whether it also means actively consulting and interacting with constituencies. As will be seen in the next section, these are the two poles of a multi-dimensional understanding of responsiveness and representation.

THREE. HOW TO TELL IF A SCHOOL BOARD IS RESPONSIVE

INTRODUCTION

This section inventories concepts and measures of school board responsiveness. As such, it provides a summary of the objective (i.e., documentable) criteria that the literature has used in describing how boards do or do not represent their communities.

THE ISSUE

Scholars disagree about whether the facts indicate that school decisionmaking is democratic or not because of doubts about "what large numbers of citizens desire in many cases." And, what many of "us" desire in different cases can be different and inconsistent.

The main axis running through and separating the many popular uses of the expression "responsiveness" is defined by the distinction and ambiguity inherent in the twin notions of responsiveness as characterizing a relationship (my school board is responsive because I agree with or benefit from its policy decisions, or I feel it is accessible) versus an interaction (my school board is responsive because it "responds" by reacting favorably to my presentations and petitions). The literature contains a continuum of concepts that incorporates and stretches between the two polar meanings.

THE ZEIGLER-TUCKER TYPOLOGY OF RESPONSIVENESS

As an example, we can begin with the most systematic study of responsiveness -- Zeigler and Tucker's (1978) eleven-district comparative, longitudinal investigation. That study contains the most comprehensive conceptual analysis of the many meanings and measures of responsiveness.

Starting from the root of the popular notion of responsiveness, i.e., "public governments...should do what the people want" (p. 37), the typology proceeds to identify two major categories:

"congruence" responsiveness, and "representational" responsiveness.

Both concepts make a reference to a relationship between rulers and ruled and both focus on the relationship "between constituent preferences and government activity" (p. 418). The difference is in how those preferences enter into policymaking.

"Representational" responsiveness posits an interaction. Policymakers are responsive in the representational sense when they (pp. 38-39): "...hear what is being said, develop a series of alternative means of satisfying demands, mediate conflicting demands and ultimately reach a decision which is formulated in response to the most dominant or most persuasive set of demands."

For "congruence" responsiveness, no interaction or communication is necessary, the constituents (pp. 39-40): "...hold general attitudes and expectations but they need not communicate such expectations to decisionmakers. Responsiveness exists when the policy actions of the government reflect the attitudes or expectations of its constituents."

Hence, "congruence" can occur regardless of constituent activity. The focus is on the content of the policy independent of the process of decisionmaking (Zeigler and Tucker, 1980:418). But the representation concept holds that government can match constituent preferences if and only if explicit communications between experts and laymen occur.

These two notions are not only conceptually but are also empirically distinct. Zeigler and Tucker (1978) go on to point out that: "A polity could be unresponsive in the representational sense and yet be responsive in the congruence sense. In fact, its congruent responsiveness could undermine the necessary conditions for representational responsiveness. Indeed, one could argue that precisely because a decision-making unit is so responsive in the sense of accurately perceiving the priorities of citizens, there is no need for the communication so critical to the representational model" (p. 40).

Moreover, there are also important conceptual and empirical distinctions within those two concepts. Zeigler and Tucker's full typology contains five categories of responsiveness: two congruence types, i.e., "agenda" and "symbolic" responsiveness; and three representational types, i.e., "service," "policy" and "influence" responsiveness. Chart 3A on the next page provides a summary overview of the five categories, including a common sense definition and more formal operational definitions and empirical indicators for each category.

OTHER CONCEPTS: A CANVASS OF MEANINGS IN THE LITERATURE

The Zeigler-Tucker framework provides a useful umbrella for collecting the various meanings of responsiveness. It comes close to but does not quite incorporate all of the meanings "out there" in the literature. What's "out there" includes a broad spectrum which comes close to reflecting popular notions of responsiveness. And, like popular notions, the concepts can be inventoried in terms of versions of responsiveness based on school board members' attitudes towards their role, of school boards' actions and procedures and of school boards' interactions with constituents.

CONCEPTS DEFINING RESPONSIVENESS IN TERMS OF BOARD ATTITUDES

Reference here is to board attitudes towards their role and function as decisionmakers and as representatives.

The former dimension is encompassed in Dyke's (1963) dichotomy between a "representational" vs. a "professional" orientation. A professionally oriented board sees itself as a screen or protective buffer between experts and the public. In its decisionmaking, the most salient input is professional expertise. Professional boards seek to do what's right, based on technical criteria. A "representationally" oriented board sees itself, at least in part, as a mechanism for pressing community demands. It considers public comment as important "data." Its sense of

CHART 3A: A SUMMARY OF THE ZIEGLER-TUCKER TYPOLOGY OF RESPONSIVENESS

MAJOR TYPE	SUBCATEGORY	DEFINITION AND FOCUS	EMPIRICAL INDICATORS
CONGRUENCE:	AGENDA	How well do representatives articulate the policy concerns of their constituents: Do they act on issues that the public feels are important?	Survey data identifies what topics the public feels are important. Agenda analysis reveals what topics the board deals with. A comparison provides data on congruence. The greater the match, the more congruence.
	SYMBOLIC	Focus on board processes and on whether constituents feel that they are represented and have access.	Survey data on public perception. Objective data on procedures: Time for public comment, frequency and timing of meeting, etc. More access = more symbolic responsiveness.
REPRESENTATIONAL:	SERVICE	Private communication involving a request for an action whose consequences are less than district-wide in scope.	Proportion of times school officials comply with the request, and proportion of requests which are not refused outright. The higher the proportion the more service responsiveness.
	POLICY	The extent to which school boards defer to lay preferences about policy articulated at board meetings.	What proportion of school board decisions match the plurality preference position of constituent statements at the meeting in support or in opposition to specific policy proposals.
		Extent to which differences in community opinion are reflected in board decisionmaking.	Policy responsiveness occurs when: (i) all lay comments are for (a policy proposal) and the board votes unanimously in favor; (ii) all lay comments are against and the board votes unanimously against; and (iii) lay comments are (continued)

CHART 3A (continued)

MAJOR TYPE	SUBCATEGORY	DEFINITION AND FOCUS	EMPIRICAL INDICATORS
REPRESEN-TATIONAL: (continued)	POLICY (continued)	Extent to which differences in community opinion are reflected in board decisionmaking.	divided and the board adopts the lay plurality preference by a divided vote.
	INFLUENCE	Extent to which constituents and board members perceive that the latter are influenced by the former. Note: Applies to public, policy demands and to private, service request contacts.	Subjective interview/survey data from: citizens who made policy requests at board meetings on whether they thought their presentations influenced board members and from board members on whether they were influenced by such representatations or by private contacts.

what's right depends, in part, on whether there is public support for the "what" in question.

Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) tested for the presence of a professional vs. representational orientation by two survey items. The first asked respondents to predict the likely success of board opposition to a superintendent's policy proposal. The second asked, "Do you ever feel any conflict between your responsibilities to the public and to the school administration?"

One of Stelzer's (1975:75) three measures of "receptivity" also tapped attitudes reflecting a representational vs. professional orientation: When the school board is about to make a policy decision, do any of its members try to gain support for the policy? "Receptivity" is a "belief that the school system should be open to public participation and influence" and is a "mechanism by which the board channels community conflict into opposition to the superintendent" (p. 73). This notion is from Stelzer's nationwide (81 school districts -- 492 board members, 81 superintendents) survey of board role behavior under conflict.

Finally, the Zeigler-Tucker (1978) measure of "influence responsiveness" (p. 450), i.e., to what extent do board members feel influenced by constituents' policy presentations, is another indicator for a representational orientation. Quite simply, "feeling" influenced (even if no real pressure is exerted, and no action is taken) suggests some kind of conscience about needing to be representative.

The original concepts of representational vs. professional were applied to boards as a whole (by Dyke, 1965), but as seen below, they can be predicted on individual board members only. As such, those measures bleed into the more conventional typology of attitudes towards representation: the "trustee," the "delegate," and the "politico."

The literature in full of references to, uses, and definitions of these concepts. A very clear and succinct summary can be found in Mann (1975:79): "...briefly, a trustee is someone whose decisions are based on his own values, even though the

represented may disagree. A delegate reverses the priority and is guided by expressed citizen preferences even at the expense of his own best judgement. A third position, somewhat between the trustee and delegate decisionmaking styles, is usually called a "politico." A representative acting in the style of a politico borrows from either the trustee or delegate styles as dicated by situations but has some internally consistent rationale for doing so. The politico does not merely waffle but rather enacts a trustee or a delegate orientation according to the dictates of circumstance.

Direct survey indicator measures for these orientations were used by Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974), as did Blanchard (1974) who asked board members if they would vote for what they think is right even if the community opposes it. Other surveys (Gross, et al., 1958 and Lipham, et al., 1969) asked similar questions: Should board members vote as representatives for segments of the community?

CONCEPTS DEFINING RESPONSIVENESS WITH REFERENCE TO BOARD ACTION AND PROCEDURE

The conceptual content of the measures discussed below is not much different from the notions of representation just discussed. The difference is in what kinds of information are needed.

The concepts below all make reference to what boards (or board members) can be observed doing, as opposed to what they say they feel. Here, there are several measures.

First, there are the Zeigler-Tucker (1978) "objective" indicators for "congruence-symbolic" responsiveness (see Chart 3A, above).

Second, the studies cited in Section Two which describe the culture of school board decisionmaking provide a vocabulary and descriptive indicators for what a board does (Becker, 1950; Bailey, 1965; Lutz, 1976; and Lutz and Gresson, 1976).

A sacred-elite board is characterized by behind the scenes discussion and either consensus or unanimous voting while deciding in public. An arena board debates openly, decides by split roll call votes, and accepts public input into its debates. The descriptive validity of the elite-arena dichotomy was established in Lutz' (1976) case study. Lutz and Gresson (1976), in their study of "anomic" boards, established the observed validity of the concepts: boards who acted like an "arena" wanted and felt that they should act as "elite" council. When they couldn't, they suffered "anomie," a breakdown of procedures and decisionmaking capacity, leading to policy paralysis and ultimately to a cataclysmic election bringing about a new board and, finally, a new superintendent.

CONCEPTS REFERRING TO BOARDS' INTERACTIONS WITH CONSTITUENTS

These concepts describe board behavior which comes closest to the civics textbook, interest-group theory of constituency demands and preferences being routinely processed by policy-makers.

Measures include: (1) the Zeigler-Tucker (1978) indicators for "representational service" ad "policy" responsiveness, i.e., how many grievances are taken up by the board, and do board votes reflect presentations of community opinions, respectively; (2) all three of Stelzer's indicators of receptivity (1975:75), i.e., (i) do board members solicit community support for a policy before enacting it, (ii) do community groups contact board members, and (iii) what proportion of time is spent on requests from the public; and (3) Zeigler, Jennings and Peak's (1974) survey data soliciting board members' reports of contact with what kind of community interest groups.

SUMMARY AND A SECOND LOOK AT THE ZEIGLER-TUCKER TYPOLOGY

There is no hard and fast correlation between the notions and measures as they exist in the literature and the conceptual

umbrella we have applied. The concepts blend into each other, and some indicators cut across concept boundaries.

This occurs because there is a unifying strand to the various notions. For example, "professionally" oriented boards are more likely to adopt a "sacred" style of decisionmaking and conduct themselves as "elite" councils, evidencing little "receptivity" and justifying that conduct with a "trustee" concept of representation. The reverse is also true. And, in this case, "nature" follows logic, as the study of "anomic" boards (Lutz and Gresson, 1976) has shown.

But this neat picture begins to dissolve if we remember the Zeigler-Tucker distinction between congruence and representational responsiveness, and if we add to the mix the concept of "agenda responsiveness" -- a board is responsive if it deals with the issues that the public is concerned with even if in so doing it does not communicate with any segments of the public, and even if it deals with those issues because the superintendent brings them up.

It is not illogical or unnatural for a board to act in a nonreceptive, sacred-elite-professional fashion and evidence no policy responsiveness but still exhibit "agenda responsiveness." In fact, this is precisely the situation envisioned in Boyd's (1976:551) criticisms of the conclusions of the 1974 Zeigler, Jennings and Peak study. Invoking the notion of "anticipated reactions," Boyd argued that "...in many, perhaps even most, school districts the superintendents (and their school boards, as well) usually attempt to act in harmony with what they perceive as the predominant community values and expectations" and since "schoolmen usually seek to avoid conflict, it is unlikely that they will very often attempt to give the community other than what the community wants" (pp. 551-552).

There is yet another wrinkle. Agenda responsiveness really describes a match or a consensus between what the board feels is important and what its"public" feels is important. Stretching the Zeigler-Tucker definition of that concept, we can distinguish between the two categories of what is important: policies

themselves and policies about making policies. A classic measure of board attitudes about how policy is made is their members' orientation to the trustee-delegate axis. On this issue, every survey done (Gross, et al., 1958; Lipham, et al., 1969; Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; Blanchard, 1974 and 1977; and NSBA, 1980) shows a clear split: The public prefers a delegate role; board members prefer a trustee role.

A final wrinkle, conceptually not earth-shattering but practically important at the grassroots, is that a board could exhibit "representational-service" responsiveness -- being more apt to consider individual grievances -- without appearing responsive on any other measure.

The advantages of the more elaborate Zeigler and Tucker typology is that is provides us with a vocabulary for more clearly and distinctly describing the world of practice.

CONCLUSION: WHAT "FACTS" DESCRIBE WHETHER A BOARD IS RESPONSIVE

The preceding survey of the literature identifies five empirically discrete meanings of responsiveness, which can provide common sense factual answers to the citizens' questions: "How can we tell, what do we look for?" These meanings are as follows:

(1) ATTITUDINAL RESPONSIVENESS. Does the board exhibit a "representational" rather than a "professional" role orientation?

(2) PROCEDURAL RESPONSIVENESS. To what extent does the board act as an "arena" rather than an "elite" council? How much "symbolic responsiveness" and "access" does it contain?

(3) AGENDA RESPONSIVENESS. To what extent are the topics most salient to the public, also the topics taken up by the board?

(4) SERVICE OR CASE RESPONSIVENESS. What proportion of "particularistic" requests are granted or not refused by board members?

(5) POLICY RESPONSIVENESS. To what extent do board decisions reflect the content and direction of public

presentations at board meetings?

This five-part categorization is not offered here as yet another typology. Rather, it is a pragmatic way of providing a handle for classifying the indicators used in the literature and can be used by citizens to focus on what facts describe a board as responsive.

The middle column of Chart 3B which concludes this section summarizes those indicators.

CHART 3B. HOW TO TELL IF A BOARD IS RESPONSIVE: A SUMMARY OF INDICATORS AS FOUND IN THE LITERATURE

TYPE	INDICATORS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR, AND HOW TO TELL	REFERENCE
ATTITUDINAL RESPONSIVENESS	DO BOARD MEMBERS EVER FEEL ANY CONFLICT BETWEEN THEIR SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION?	ZEIGLER, et al., 1974
	DO BOARD MEMBERS REPORT FEELING INFLUENCED BY PUBLIC DEMANDS AND PRESENTATIONS?	ZEIGLER and TUCKER, 1978
	DO BOARD MEMBERS FEEL THAT IN VOTING THEY SHOULD REPRESENT CONSTITUENCY INTERESTS AND GROUPS (E.G., THE "DELEGATE" ROLE ORIENTATION)?	GROSS, et al., 1958; LIPHAM, et al., 1967; ZEIGLER, et al., 1974; BLANCHARD, 1974
PROCEDURAL RESPONSIVENESS	IS THERE A SPECIFIED TIME FOR PUBLIC COMMENT?	ZEIGLER and TUCKER, 1978
	HOW MUCH TIME IS SET ASIDE FOR DEALING WITH CITIZEN QUESTIONS? IS THIS PUBLICIZED?	STELZER, 1975
	WHAT PROPORTION OF VOTES ARE UNANIMOUS? ARE ROLL-CALL VOTES COMMON? HOW MUCH PUBLIC DISAGREEMENT IS THERE?	LUTZ, 1976
	DO BOARD MEMBERS COMPLAIN WHEN THERE IS OPEN DEBATE ON THE BOARD?	LUTZ and GRESSON, 1977
	HOW MANY TIMES ARE REFERENCES TO PUBLIC OPINIONS OR PREFERENCES USED TO JUSTIFY A POLICY POSITION?	LUTZ, 1976
AGENDA RESPONSIVENESS	TO WHAT EXTENT DO BOARD DECISIONS ON KEY ISSUES MATCH LOCAL PUBLIC OPINION POLL INFORMATION ON PUBLIC PREFERENCES, ON THOSE KEY ISSUES, EVEN THOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO LOBBYING OF THE BOARD?	ZEIGLER, JENNINGS and PEAK, 1974
	DO THE BOARD AGENDA ITEMS REFLECT WHAT LOCAL PUBLIC OPINION DATA SHOW TO BE THE ISSUES THAT THE PUBLIC THINKS ARE MOST IMPORTANT?	ZEIGLER and TUCKER,
CASE RESPONSIVENESS	NOTE: PLEASE SEE THE CATEGORY "REPRESENTATIONAL: SERVICE" ON CHART 3A, ABOVE	ZEIGLER and TUCKER, 1978

CHART 3B. HOW TO TELL IF A BOARD IS RESPONSIVE: A SUMMARY OF INDICATORS AS FOUND IN THE LITERATURE

TYPE	INDICATORS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR, AND HOW TO TELL	REFERENCE
POLICY RESPON-SIVENESS	DO BOARDS, OR BOARD MEMBERS, SOLICIT COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR A POLICY BEFORE ENACTING IT?	STELZER, 1975
	WHAT PROPORTION OF TIME IS SPENT ON PUBLIC COMMENT AND HEARINGS?	STELZER, 1975
	HOW MANY GROUPS ACTIVE ON EDUCATIONAL ISSUES CAN BOARD MEMBERS IDENTIFY?	STELZER, 1975; ZEIGLER, et al., 1974
	IF ALL PUBLIC COMMENT ON A PROPOSAL IS IN FAVOR, DOES A BOARD VOTE UNANIMOUSLY IN FAVOR?	ZEIGLER and TUCKER, 1978
	IF ALL PUBLIC COMMENT IS AGAINST, DOES A BOARD UNANIMOUSLY VOTE AGAINST THAT PROPOSAL?	ZEIGLER and TUCKER, 1978
	IF PUBLIC COMMENT IS DIVIDED, DOES THE BOARD SETTLE THE ISSUE BY A DIVIDED VOTE?	ZEIGLER and TUCKER, 1978
	DO CITIZENS WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE THE BOARD ON A POLICY MATTER FEEL THAT THEIR PRESENTATION HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE?	ZEIGLER and TUCKER, 1978

FOUR. FINDINGS: ARE SCHOOL BOARDS RESPONSIVE? AND WHAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE?

INTRODUCTION

In this section, we turn our attention to and inventory specific findings and conclusions. In addressing the first general question, "Are boards responsive?", we summarize the major specific conclusions of the "who governs" literature. That summary is organized in terms of three questions: do administrators follow the mandates of legislators (that is, do boards exercise legislative supremacy), do legislators follow the instructions of their constituents, and is responsiveness to public preferences and demands the norm of policymaking? And is electoral support the major source of power?

Readers will recognize these three questions as a paraphrase of the civics textbook ideal of democracy, as first presented in Section One, and debated in Section Two. Here, we quickly summarize the major findings of that debate.

In the second part of our inventory, we turn our attention to what makes a difference for any observed variations in boards' responsiveness to constituencies. The organizing questions are these: Does it make any difference how boards are organized? Is there more responsiveness to some kinds of groups rather than others? And, are some ways of approaching the board likely to be more successful than others?

QUESTION NO. 1: DO ADMINISTRATORS FOLLOW THE MANDATES OF LEGISLATORS?

INTRODUCTION: THE ISSUES

This a more precise way of paraphrasing the "who governs" issue. The issue is not obedience or illegitimate exercise of administrative authority. The question arises out of the accumulation of piecemeal evidence suggesting that because of the sacred decisionmaking culture of boards, these boards end up being agents of legitimation rather than sources of policy. And,

the issue is the source of policy. The larger question is whose mandate is being implemented.

HOW THE ISSUE IS TREATED IN THE LITERATURE

Major Sources

Four sources provide the bulk of our generalizable knowledge on this issue. These are:

(1) Zeigler and Tucker's (1978) longitudinal comparative study of patterns of decisionmaking and communication in a nationwide sample of eleven school districts.

(2) Stelzer's (1975) examination of board receptivity to citizen access and the conditions that create and maintain it, based on interview data with 492 board members and 81 superintendents in a nationwide sample of 81 school districts.

(3) Zeigler, Jennings and Peak's (1974) 83-district survey, described in Section Two, above.

(4) McCarty and Ramsey's (1970) survey of a regional sample (Midwest and Northeast) of 51 communities, investigating the effects of differences in community power structure on board-superintendent relations.

(On this topic and throughout our presentation of "findings" we will cite other references when used to clarify, or qualify, the major sources of evidence.)

Measures

Two kinds of measures used in these studies yield information on who follows whose mandate.

The first, used in Tucker and Zeigler (1980a -- the source used on this topic for the 1978 Zeigler and Tucker "responsiveness") study records the extent of superintendent influence in shaping the policy mandates. The second, used in Stelzer (1975) and in Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) measured (for lack of a better term) superintendent "power": the incidence and outcome of clashes between board members and superintendents. How often

are there disagreements? Who usually wins?

McCarty and Ramsey (1970) described four possible roles for superintendents vis-a-vis the board which are (in descending order of dominance): decisionmaker, professional advisor, political strategist, and functionary. The indicator for each type used aspects of both influence and power concepts.

FINDINGS

Sources of Policy

1.1 The formal agenda is, by and large, set by the superintendent. This was true for two-thirds of the cases in both the 1978 Zeigler and Tucker "responsiveness" study and in the 1974 Zeigler, Jennings and Peak "who governs" study (Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a:9).

1.2 Superintendent and staff initiate nearly half of all policy proposals which get discussed; board members initiate a quarter (Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a).

Policy Formation

1.3 Two thirds of all policies finally adopted are originally articulated (not necessarily formally "moved") by a board member, one-third by a superintendent and staff (Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a:19).

1.4 Most policy decisions are formally voted upon, 95% are decided by unanimous vote (range 62 to 99%), and in 96% of the cases, the superintendent's proposals are enacted (ibid, p. 19).

Policy Debates and Challenges: Who Follows Whose Instructions

The focus here shifts to instances in which there is a superintendent-board split in deciding what administrative actions the board should mandate. Some conclusions from the 1974 Zeigler, Jennings and Peak study are:

1.5 The level of board opposition to the superintendent's proposals was varied. In a little over one-third of them there

was a majority of members in opposition. No board opposition was reported in 17% of the cases.

1.6 Board opposition is not likely to prevail. A majority of members in slightly more than half of this nationwide sample of school boards said it was likely.

What Makes A Difference?

The eleven-district Zeigler and Tucker 1978 responsiveness study lacked the sample size and, more importantly, enough variation in practice on the indicators focused upon here. The Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974), Stelzer (1975), and the McCarty and Ramsey (1970) surveys do have enough variation to provide clues as to what makes a difference.

1.7 Board opposition to the superintendent is not positively related to estimates of the probability of winning (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974). That is, the same boards which exhibited opposition to the superintendent also reported low estimates, on the part of both "loyalists" and "oppositionists," of the probability of success. This suggests that other factors may be at work in promoting opposition. Some of these are identified in other data from the Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) and from the Stelzer (1975) and the McCarty and Ramsey(1970) studies.

1.8 Levels of community conflict and tension make a difference and lead to a greater propensity to oppose superintendents. More specifically:

1.8.1 The greater the conflict among community opinions, the the more disparity there is between board and community opinions, the higher the likelihood of opposition to a superintendent's proposals (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; Stelzer, 1975).

1.8.2 Increase in electoral competition, i.e., number of contested elections and incumbent defeats is associated with more oppositional behavior (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; Iannacone and Lutz, 1970; Stelzer, 1975).

1.8.3 A highly polarized, conflictual, "factional"

community power structure is associated with boards jealously, albeit insecurely, guarding their policymaking prerogatives and only gradually opposing superintendents (McCarty and Ramsey, 1970).

Note: McCarty and Ramsey found a rough correlation among: types of community power structures (in terms of concentration of power and types of cleavage in interests); their [the power structures'] reflections, in microcosm, in how boards express conflict; and types of superintendent roles, in terms of degree of dominance, associated with each pair -- board decisionmaking style as associated with community power structure. Their conceptual framework and major conclusions are schematicized on Chart 4A, on the page immediately following.

There are some conclusions from that study which conform with Stelzer's (1975) conclusion that:

1.9 The more open to community influences a board is, the greater the likelihood of board opposition to superintendents.

Stelzer found board "receptivity" to community opinion to be a means for channeling community conflict into opposition to the superintendent. In McCarty and Ramsey, the weakest superintendents had boards that were accessible, in fact controlled by community elites. The strongest are in "inert communities" -- those without conflict and without political activity on schooling issues.

IMPLICATIONS

An underlying theme in the evidence about "what makes a difference" is that a higher level of citizen action and activity -- what the scholars call "tension" and "conflict" does appear to make boards try to exercise more legislative supremacy.

CAVEATS: CONTRADICTORY EVIDENCE AND CONFOUNDING FACTORS

However, trying to exercise legislative supremacy does not mean succeeding. Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) found that:

1.10 Community conflict leads to more opposition, but more

CHART 4A: COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURES, SCHOOL BOARD ORIENTATION AND SUPERINTENDENTS

THE McCARTY-RAMSEY STUDY (1970)

FINDINGS FROM THE McCARTY AND RAMSEY STUDY

Type of Community Power Structure	School Board Characteristics per Community Power Structure			Superintendents' Role Per Board Characteristics From Low to High Dominance
	Policymaking Initiative	Patterns of Cleavage	Sources of Policy	
MONOLITHIC	HIGH	LOW OR NON-EXISTANT	VALUES AND INTEREST OF LOCAL ELITES	FUNCTIONARY
FACTIONAL	MEDIUM, VIGILANT OF POLICYMAKING PREROGATIVES YET OFTEN IMMOBILIZED	POLARIZED, PERSISTENT WITH ROUGH EQUALITY OF OPPOSING FORCES	INDETERMINATE	PROFESSIONAL ADVISOR
PLURALISTIC	HIGH	FLUID, INDIVIDUALISTIC ISSUE-SPECIFIC	INDIVIDUAL JUDGEMENTS OF THE MERITS OF EACH CASE IRRESPECTIVE OF CONSTITUENCY PRESSURES	POLITICAL STRATEGIST
INERT	LOW. LEGITIMATES RATHER THAN MAKES POLICY	NONE EVIDENT	SUPERINTENDENTS' RECOMMENDATIONS	DECISIONMAKER

conflict leads to less probability of success. More specifically:

(a) In non-metropolitan communities, conflict strengthens the boards' ability to exercise legislative supremacy, but on the other hand conflict is less likely to occur.

(b) In metropolitan areas conflict and community interest group demands are more likely to occur and do lead to more board opposition to the superintendent but with less likelihood of success. In metropolitan areas, tension and demand strengthen the hand of the superintendent and places a higher premium on technical expertise as a conflict avoidance and resolution strategy.

On the latter point, similar conclusions were reached by other students of big city school politics (McGiveney and Haught, 1972; Gittell and Hollander, 1968; and Petersen, 1976).

Finally, Stelzer (1975) found an intriguing set of relationships among "receptivity," community conflict, and board opposition to the superintendent:

1.11 "When there is public dissent and arousal, the receptive board translates it into opposition to the superintendent. When, however, the boards do not perceive public arousal, the more receptive boards are <u>less likely</u> to oppose the superintendent" (Stelzer, 1975:78).

QUESTION NO. 2. DO LEGISLATORS FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS, AND IS RESPONSIVENESS TO PUBLIC DEMANDS AND PREFERENCES THE NORM OF POLICYMAKING?

INTRODUCTION: THE ISSUE

This is the reverse side of the coin for the issues addressed immediately above. Since professional administrators are the major source of policy cues for the board, then by implication the answer to the present question is "no." But the general question does raise some interesting sub-issues:

(1) To what extent is there contact between legislators and constituents? (b) What is the policy content of those contacts? (c) How do board members perceive the legitimacy of public demands? And, (d) to what extent are public preferences expressed in board decisionmaking?

HOW THE ISSUE IS TREATED IN THE LITERATURE:
MAJOR SOURCES

Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) and Tucker and Zeigler (1980a), previously described, contain evidence on contacts, on the content of contacts, and on the congruence of public preferences and board policies. Zeigler, Jennings and Peak's (1974), and Crain's (1968) survey of desegregation politics, Lutz and Gresson's (1976) case studies of "anomic" board behavior, and a whole series of attitude surveys -- Gross, et al. (1958), Lipham, et al. (1969), and Blanchard (1974 and 1977) -- provide evidence on board role orientation vis-a-vis community demands.

FINDINGS

How Much Interaction Is There Between Legislators and Constituents?

2.1 There is very little contact between community interest groups and school boards. Most districts do not receive much attention from community interest groups (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; see also suburban school politics studies such as Martin, 1962; and Steinberg, 1971). The most active groups are "insider" groups, e.g., PTA's and teachers organizations (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974).

2.2 What contact there is between boards and constituents is apt to be individual rather than collective (Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a), sporadic and episodic (Martin, 1962; Boyd, 1975; Steinberg, 1971; and Stelzer, 1975).

Are Legislators Apt To Be "Instructed" In Their Contacts With Constituents?

The Zeigler and Tucker eleven-district "responsiveness" study (results referenced in Zeigler and Tucker, 1978; and Tucker

and Zeigler, 1980a) contain evidence on the type of contacts, the degree to which those contacts have a policy content, and the degree to which those contacts influence policy. The evidence is as follows:

2.3 Most contacts do not have much policy content, and most often take the form of (in decreasing frequency) supplying information, requesting information, supporting an issue already being discussed, or opposing that issue (Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a:17).

2.4 Where public input does have a policy content, it is not apt to be frequent or influential. More specifically:

(a) A very Small proportion of agenda items originate directly with the public (Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a:9) and less than ten percent of all policy-relevant statements at board meetings come from the public (ibid., p. 17).

(b) Board voting does follow community preferences when there is a strong and vocal current of demand, but board votes do not reflect split opinions in community input. Where such splits occurred, boards still decided by unanimous votes (Zeigler and Tucker, 1978:447).

2.5 Boards are only apt to solicit community opinion under conditions of stress, when there is already a high level of conflict on an issue or when some board members are looking for allies in their opposition to a superintendent (Stelzer, 1975).

2.6 Boards agree with superintendents, that it is not their [the board's] duty to be instructed by constituents' articulated demands. Specifically:

(a) There is feeling that special interest groups have no legitimate place in the governance of schools (Zeiler, Jennings and Peak, 1974).

(b) Survey after survey (Gross, et al., 1958; Lipham, et al., 1969; Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; Blanchard, 1974 and 1977) show that boards prefer (along with superintendents) a "trustee" role orientation, while the public prefers a "delegate" role.

(c) Even when a high volume of public demand or a

divisive issue leads a board to exhibit an open arena-like behavior, that situation is seen as illegitimate and temporary (Lutz and Gresson, 1976).

Do Legislators Reflect The Preferences of Constituents?

2.7 Much of the time, legislators do not legislate. Much of the agenda is devoted to information and to review of housekeeping issues (Hines, 1951; Zeigler and Tucker, 1978). Decisions are most often made incrementally (Iannacone and Lutz, 1970) and in some cases only ratify initiatives already undertaken (Kerr, 1964).

2.8 Public opinion survey data show little public awareness of educational issues (Mann, 1975; Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974) and many of the issues of most salience to the public are beyond the scope of local boards' legal authority or ability to act (Zeiler and Tucker, 1978).

2.9 Board opinion (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974) and board action (Zeigler and Tucker, 1978) -- which issues are dealt with -- more closely reflects elite and professional opinion than general public opinion. Note: "elite" in this context included citizen and parent activists.

2.10 Boards are least likely to express constituents' preferences with respect to policy about how policy is to be made. Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) found that in all types of districts, there was least board-constituency agreement on the "governance" issue and more agreement on "race" and "finance" issues. This is consistent with the aforementioned split between the public and board members in preferences for a "trustee" as opposed to a "delegate" representation.

What Makes A Difference?

The evidence is not broad or cumulative enough to permit any general observations. In fact, the eleven-district Zeigler and Tucker (1978) responsiveness study proposes that in order to test whether a board is responsive to the policy preferences of its constituents three elements must be present: "...public demands must be articulated...a school board decision related to public

demands must be made...a public plurality preference must be ascertainable." But only four out of the eleven districts contained these elements, and the "test" could only be applied to less than ten percent of the decisions analyzed in that study (p. 446).

QUESTION NO. 3: IS ELECTORAL SUPPORT THE BASIS OF POWER?

INTRODUCTION: THE ISSUES

This question can be paraphrased to read: Are elections a mechanism for transmitting consistent policy preferences into legislation? And, do elections act as mechanisms for maintaining the accountability of the governors to the governed?

HOW THE ISSUE IS TREATED IN THE LITERATURE:
MAJOR SOURCES

There is growing literature on school elections, board elections and bond and tax referenda. We focus only on those studies which relate school board elections to school board characteristics and behaviors with respect to legislative supremacy and constituent responsiveness. Major sources include: Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; Stelzer, 975; Iannacone and Lutz, 1970; Rossell's (1975) 58-city desegregation study measuring the impact of desegregation on community conflict and the impact of the latter on an electoral conflict; Mitchell and Badarak's (1977) five-district study of the ideological basis of school board elections, Taebel's (1977) case study of types of voters in school board elections, and Milton and Bicel's (1982) systematic Florida study of variations in voter turnout.

FINDINGS: DO ELECTIONS TRANSMIT CONSTITUENCY POLICY PREFERENCES INTO THE SYSTEM

3.1 In the long run, elections do make a difference in that contested elections lead to board and superintendent turnover.

This is the pattern discovered in Iannacone and Lutz's

(1970) thesis of cataclysmic elections. If the most important policy decision made by a board is its choice of a superintendent, then elections do make a difference, if turnout is relatively high. Also, Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) found that school districts with no contest for school board elections tended to have the greatest congruence of policy preferences between the public and the board. All of the studies found a nexus between hotly contested elections and boards' reassertion of legislative supremacy.

3.2 The higher the level of electoral conflict, the greater the likelihood of board opposition to a superintendent, of changes in board membership, and of changes in the superintendency (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; Stelzer, 1975).

3.3 In the short run, routine elections do not transmit public policy preferences into the decisionmaking system. Specifically:

(a) Mitchell and Badarak (1977) found that although it was possible to discern liberal-conservative ideological content among both candidates and voter preferences in school board elections, they did not follow that through to an analysis of what happens -- how do the successful candidates act -- after the election.

(b) Some clue as to what happens is provided in Kerr's (1964) study of new board members' socialization. Over time, new members came to believe that they had no business in making decisions over instructional program, even if they campaigned on that issue.

(c) Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) found that campaigning on substantive issues of educational program was comparatively rare. Many board candidates (44% of their sample) could not cite one substantive difference, on issues of education, between themselves and their opponents.

(d) There is very little evidence that candidates court or seek the endorsement of community interest groups (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974).

3.4 Elections serve to provide citizens with a means to express reactive post-hoc judgements rather than pro-active policy cues. Support for this proposition is implicit in the above data showing the lack of much ideological and substantive policy content, and interest group participation, in elections. Additional evidence shows:

(a) Rossell (1975:63) found that "the implementation of a specific controversial policy causes more electoral dissent than the controversy surrounding the demand. Citizens do not defeat incumbents because of controversy over policy demands until the decisionmaking body actually acquiesces and agrees to implement the demand."

(b) In the Zeigler and Tucker (1978) "responsiveness" study, two out of their eleven districts did not renew a superintendent's contract. In neither case was there any discussion of, or dissent from, the superintendent's policy positions.

(c) Stelzer's (1975) "receptivity" study found that incumbent board candidates would react to public policy discontent by channeling it into opposition to the superintendent.

3.4 Electoral conflict is rare rather than normal. Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) found that more than 34% of their board member sample gained their seat by appointment or through uncontested election. Of the 66% who had to compete, 44% could not describe any substantive policy differences between themselves and their opponents.

3.5 Higher turnout does not necessarily lead to more electoral conflict (Taebel, 1977). Nor does low turnout mean an absence of conflict (Rossell, 1975). Taebel, for example, found that his "constituency voters" -- the solid core of the electorate that consistently votes in both high and low visibility elections -- are more discerning. They are quicker to reward and punish incumbent candidates for any changes in school policy.

IMPLICATIONS

Elections do serve an accountability function. They do not serve as a mechanism for routinely transmitting public policy preferences into the legislative process. In fact, even when elections serve the accountability function, they are more apt to be plebiscites about the superintendent than about the board, even though the vehicle through which the no-confidence vote is exercised is the defeat of incumbent school board candiates.

QUESTION NO. 4. DOES IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE HOW BOARDS ARE ORGANIZED?

INTRODUCTION

Board "organization" refers to what could be called "structural variables," that is, those characterizatics of a board that are formally defined in its charter and arise out of those characteristics. The sub-questions we ask here: Does it make any difference who serves on the board? Do different electoral arrangements lead to different kinds of members? Does it make a difference how the board is structurally related to other political units which share its territory? And, finally, does it make a difference how internally cohesive boards are?

MAJOR SOURCES

The above questions pertain to what we called, in our review of the literature in Section Two, above, the "re-politicization thesis": make boards more politically vulnerable and you, presumably, will get a more representative and responsive legislative process. And this, it is said, requires charter reforms which in effect undo Progressive Reform: the reinstatement of partisan, ward-based elections coinciding with other municipal elections, deconsolidation, and fiscal dependency, rather than fiscal reform.

Here, we focus not on the debate about these issues, but on the evidence which can clarify the debate.* Since much of the

debate hinges on the putative effects of different electoral arrangements, our sources include all of the references in the discussion of "Question No. 3," above. Also relevant to the issues raised here are: the Gittell, et al. (1979) comparative longitudinal study of 17 local citizen organizations active in education policy advocacy in three cities; LaNoue and Smith's (1973) study on decentralization and community control which, in part, looked for evidence of changes in racial and socio-economic board composition after decentralization; and Cibulka's (1982) ten-city study of the politics of retrenchment and school closing.

FINDINGS

Does It Make Any Difference Who Serves On The Board?

4.1 Board membership is demographically unrepresentative, skewed towards males, whites and high status groups (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; Lyke, 1970). This does not distinguish school boards from any number of other governmental bodies. Moreover:

4.1.1 Gittell, et al. (1979) found that demographically more representative boards are not thereby any more responsive. A similar conclusion was reached by LaNoue and Smith (1973).

4.2 Boards are distinguished by not attracting the politically active elites as much as other local legislative and rulemaking bodies do (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; McCarty and Ramsey, 1970).

Zeigler and Jennings, for example, found that (p. 29) "board members are no more likely than the general public to come from homes that are more involved in public affairs." There are two or three major recruitment channels: from politics (board membership is one stop in the career of officeholding) and civic leadership (business leaders, ex-citizen and parent activists -- see Salisbury, 1980, on the latter).

4.3 Politician board members are more likely to be responsive. Specifically:

(a) "Politician" board members are more likely to adopt a delegate-role orientation (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; McCarty and Ramsey, 1970).

(b) "Politician" board members are more likely to raise policy disputes with the superintendent (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; Stelzer, 1975).

(c) "Politician" board members are also more likely to solicit community opinion, cultivate constituency groups, and seek their endorsement in elections, and campaign on educational program issues.

Do Different Electoral Arrangements Lead To Different Kinds Of Members?

4.4 Appointed boards are no less responsive or representative than elected boards.

4.5 Politician-type board members are most likely to be found in unreformed districts -- where there are partisan, ward-based elections (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974).

4.6 Nominating caucuses are most likely to produce non-politician candidates (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; McCarty and Ramsey, 970).

4.7 Ward-based electoral arrangements lead to more superintendent-board conflict, and to a greater sensitivity to local neighborhood-based constituency interests (Cibulka, 1982).

4.8 In unreformed districts with partisan, ward-based elections, there is more campaigning on educational issues, and more electoral competition -- higher rates of contested seats and incumbent loss (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974). Evidence from Florida suggests that unreformed systems also promote higher voter turnout. Milton and Bicel (1982) found that: voter turnouts are higher than the nationwide average and that levels of competition for school boards were higher than for governor, U.S. Senator, or utilities commissioner.

4.9 Unreformed districts showed a more board-constituent agreement on finance issues, although there was no difference between reformed and unreformed districts on the issues of race and governance (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, (1974).

Does It Make A Difference How Boards Are Related To Other Governmental Bodies?

4.10 There is yet no evidence whether lack of fiscal autonomy makes any difference.

4.11 When school board elections are held at the same time as other local elections, turnout is higher (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974), there is more electoral competition (Rossell, 1975; Kirby, et al., 1973), and there is more media attention to and a higher visibility of school issues (Gittell, et al., 1979).

Does Board Internal Cohesion Make A Difference?

As we saw in Section Two, a "sacred-professionally oriented-elite" type of decisionmaking culture placed a premium on board unity and consensus. Both the Zeigler, Jennings, and Peak (1974) and the McCarty and Ramsey studies developed a similar scale for describing levels of unity based on the amount of disagreement and the patterns of disagreement. These are (i) consensual -- the norm of unity and cooperation prevails; (ii) factional -- the same two or three subgroups almost always disagree on any number of issues; and (iii) pluralistic -- there are shifting patterns of coalitions depending on the issue. The evidence is as follows.

4.12 A majority of boards in both the Zeigler and the McCarty samples were pluralistic in their internal cleavage patterns.

4.13 Factional boards are most likely to exhibit opposition, are the least likely to have a "professional-sacred" orientation, and are most accessible (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974). But then,

4.13.1 Factional boards are most likely to exhibit opposition to the superintendent but are not likely to succeed (ibid.).

4.14 Pluralistic boards are most likely to succeed in overruling a superintendent if opposition does occur (ibid.).

4.15 Consensual boards are least accessible and most likely to be deferential to the superintendent (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974; McCarty and Ramsey, 1970).

IMPLICATION

One immediate implication of the above evidence about board cohesion is that more accessibility to community input does not necessarily mean more legislative supremacy. And, just because a superintendent doesn't dominate a board, this doesn't mean that a board is thereby responsive and representative. Since we couldn't find evidence relating those cohesion factors to other board structure variables, the practical significance is not clear. Citizens can not lobby for or legislate "cohesion."

On the other factors, the evidence is clear. Institutional arrangements do make a difference even though Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974:142) were led to admit that "...the evidence for the view that unreformed political school boards perform their representative function better than reformed boards is far from compelling."

What is compelling for the social scientists reaching for categorical generalizations of high probability, and what is significant for practitioners may, as in the present case, be quite different.

It is clear that "who" (what kinds of people) serves on the board makes a difference. And it is also clear that there are institutional arrangements which promote one type of office holder rather than another. Hence, there are enough research clues to answer the question "what to lobby for?" In the remainder of this Section, we turn our attention to the evidence, fragmentary as it is, relevant to the "how to lobby" questions.

QUESTION NO. 5: ARE BOARDS MORE RESPONSIVE TO SOME KINDS OF COMMUNITY GROUPS RATHER THAN OTHERS?

This is the first topic that relates to the "how to lobby" issue. Groups can't become other than what they are, of course, but it is helpful to know the odds. Our focus is on community, i.e., locally-based, non-school employee groups. We have two major sources of evidence: Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974), and Gittell, et al. (1979).

Zeigler, Jennings and Peak typed groups first as to whether

they were "internal" (e.g., PTA's) or "external" (e.g., a Chamber of Commerce). The external groups were further typed according to whether they were "non-ideological" (a League of Women Voters) or "ideological", such as a civil rights group (left wing) and a fiscally conservative taxpayers group (right wing). The Zeigler evidence is as follows.

5.1 "Internal" groups have more access than external groups. The PTA was most often cited as having contact with the board, followed by teachers organizations.

5.2 Among external groups, most contact was with ideological rather than non-ideological groups, and with left-wing and civil rights rather than with right-wing groups. (Note: this is based on 1968 data. And, also, it was only in metropolitan districts that the study found much group activity.)

Gittell had a slightly richer structure-function typology of groups, dividing the sample of 17 citizens organizations by group SES: class and race; by constituency base: neighborhood vs. citywide; and by purpose: policy advocacy vs. service delivery (e.g., self-help organizations). The typology also, like Zeigler's, had an internal (mandated citizens advisory committees) and an external (voluntary, outside of the system watchdog or interest group) category. Gittell's findings are:

5.3 Class was more important than race in determining group access to school decisionmaking.

5.4 Internal groups were more likely than external groups to have access.

5.5 Boards were more apt to pay attention to citywide rather than neighborhood based groups.

QUESTION NO. 6: ARE BOARDS MORE APT TO BE RESPONSIVE ON SOME ISSUES RATHER THAN OTHERS?

Our focus here is on types of issues and on evidence informing citizen participants as to the probability of their getting a hearing on their type of issue.

There are numerous typologies in the literature. We focus only on those that have been used to either measure or indirectly

indicate any of the main types of board responsiveness.

One distinction is between an issue that raises a demand for districtwide policy response vs. the resolution of an individual case -- a grievance or request for service (Zeigler and Tucker, 1978).

Another distinction is between internal issues (e.g., instructional materials and methods, personnel) and external issues (e.g., finance, building) (Zald, 1969).

Issues can also be distinguished in terms of whether they apply to the substance or policy, or to the process of how policy is made, or to policy about policymaking. For example, the 1974 Zeigler, Jennings and Peak study tested board-constituent agreement on three issues: finance, race and governance. The latter is an issue of policy about policymaking.

Issues can also be typed by their scope and impact of the policy decisions they imply. Distributive decisions give a benefit to some group without detracting from any other group. Regulative decisions establish rules, constraints or opportunities that apply to all equally. Re-distributive decisions give benefit to some at the expense of or a loss to others (Lowi, 1964).

Finally, issues of any type can be characterized in terms of their visibility in the local and popular media.

Major sources for our research clues about issues are: Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974); Zeigler and Tucker (1978); Gittell, et al. (1979); and two studies which traced the impact of retrenchment on the culture of school policymaking, Boyd (1982) and Cibulka (1982).

The evidence is as follows:

6.1 External issues are more likely to cause boards to assert their legislative supremacy and be more receptive to community input. For example, Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) found that board members were least likely to oppose an administrative proposal about instructional programs.

6.2 There is more citizen activity leading to higher levels of community tension and conflict found to be associated with

more board responsiveness, on external issues and on issues which have high visibility (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1984; Gittell, et al., 1979).

6.3 There is more citizen-board agreement on policy substance than on policy about how policy is made. Zeigler, Jennings and Peak (1974) found more agrement on race and finance than on governance issues. (Note also the evidence reviewed earlier on board vs. public disagreement about the trustee vs. delegate theories of representation.)

6.4 There is more responsiveness on citizens' service (i.e., "case") demands than on citizens' policy demands.

6.5 Redistributive policy issues are more likely to change a board from a sacred-professional to a secular-representational orientation. Boyd (1982) found that retrenchment decisionmaking tends to decrease the deference paid to professional expertise and technical information.

6.6 Redistributive policy issues increase board opposition to administrative proposals (Cibulka, 1982).

QUESTION NO. 7: ARE SOME WAYS OF APPROACHING THE BOARD LIKELY TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN OTHERS?

Although phrased as a tactical question from the self-interested perspective of a citizen or citizens group, the issue has a much wider theoretical importance. The "politics of education" is an interaction among the public, its representative legislators, and professionals. Much more is known about the latter two than the former. Even the research literature focused on citizen participation has a more systematic set of concepts and data analysis procedures for describing what superintendents and boards "do", than it has for what citizens "do." Citizen action is most often described anecdotally.

The major, and only source of systematic evidence on this question is Zeigler and Tucker's (1978) eleven-district study of responsiveness. To document responsiveness, the study charted patterns of communication between the decisionmakers and constituents. Recognizing that a response requires a demand,

that study traced the "history", the success, of different kinds of demands and of different ways of presenting those demands. For the question at hand, the important distinctions in that study can be paraphrased as being the difference among : (i) a demand for service; (ii) a demand designed to influence policy; and (iii) a demand to have access to policy influence. With respect to different ways of presenting those demands, the key distinctions are between (a) going to the administration vs. going to the board, and (b) making individual private demands vs. making group and public demands.

The patterns revealed in that study are as follows:

7.1 There is more responsiveness for service demands than for policy influence demands, and least for access to policy influence demands.

7.2 Superintendents get more, and respond to more, service demands than do board members.

7.3 Superintendents are also more apt than boards to be responsive to demands for access to policy influence.

7.4 Even for policy demands, individual private contacts and public presentations receive more of a response from both boards and superintendents, than do group demands presented in public meetings.

This pattern is revealing. If subsequent research supports it, it means that the civics textbook model of getting a group of people together and marching down to the board may be the least effective way of trying to influence policy. An additional wrinkle is provided by data from the 1974 Zeigler, Jennings and Peak study which found that (p. 41) "...the perceived legitimacy on the part of board members of individual versus collective demands is negatively correlated." More concretely:

7.5 Boards which are more apt to be responsive to individual citizen demands are less likely to be responsive to citizens groups' demands, and vice-versa (Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974).

SUMMARY

The practical implications of the latter set of evidence and of the entire stock of evidence discussed above are discussed in the fifth and last section of this Report, below. Chart 4B, on the pages immediately following, provides a summary inventory of that evidence.

CHART 4B: INVENTORY OF PROPOSITIONS ON BOARD RESPONSIVENESS

QUESTION	PROPOSITION	SOURCE
1. Do administrators follow the mandates of legislators?	1.1 The formal agenda is set by the superintendent.	Zeigler and Tucker, 1978 Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	1.2 Superintendent and staff initiate nearly half of policy proposals which get discussed. Board members initiate one-quarter.	Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a
	1.3 Two-thirds of policies adopted are originally articulated by a board member, one-third by the superintendent or a member of his or her staff.	" "
	1.4 Most policy decisions are formally voted on and 85% are decided by unanimous vote. 96% of the superintendent's proposals were enacted.	" "
	1.5 Level of board opposition to superintendent's proposal varies.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	1.6 Board opposition is not likely to prevail.	" "
	1.7 Board opposition to the superintendent is not positively related to their estimates of the probability of winning.	" "
	1.8 Levels of community conflict and tension make a difference and leaders show a greater propensity to oppose superintendents when conflict and tension exist.	" "
	1.8.1 The greater the conflict the higher the likelihood of opposition to a superintendent's proposals.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Stelzer, 1975
	1.8.2 Increase in electoral competition is associated with more opposition.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Iannacone and Lutz, 1970
	1.8.3 A "factional" community power structure is associated with boards guarding their policymaking prerogatives and opposing superintendents.	Stelzer, 1975 McCarty and Ramsey, 1970

CHART 4B (continued): INVENTORY OF PROPOSITIONS ON BOARD RESPONSIVENESS

QUESTION		PROPOSITION	SOURCE
	1.9	The more open to community influences a board is the more likely board opposition.	Stelzer, 1975
	1.10	Community conflict leads to more opposition, but more conflict leads to less probability of success.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	1.11	When there is public dissent and arousal, receptive boards translate it into opposition to the superintendent.	Stelzer (1975)
2. Do legislators follow the instruction of their constituents, and is responsiveness to public demands and preferences the norm in policy-making?	2.1	There is very little contact between community interest groups and school boards.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Martin, 1962 Steinberg, 1971 Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a
	2.2	What contact there is between boards and constituents is apt to be individual rather than collective, and is usually sporadic and episodic.	Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a Martin, 1962 Boyd, 1975 Steinberg, 1971 Stelzer, 1975
	2.3	Most contacts do not have much policy content.	Tucker and Zeigler, 1980a
	2.4	Where public input does have a policy content, it is not apt to be frequent or influential.	" "
	2.5	Boards are only apt to solicit community opinion under conditions of stress, when there is a high level of conflict, or they are looking for allies in their opposition to a superintendent.	Stelzer, 1975

CHART 4B (continued): INVENTORY OF PROPOSITIONS ON BOARD RESPONSIVENESS

QUESTION		PROPOSITION	SOURCE
	2.6	Boards agree with superintendents that it is not the board's function to be instructed by the demands of their constituents.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Gross, et al., 1958 Lipham, et al., 1969 Blanchard, 1974 & 1977 Lutz and Gresson, 1976
	2.7	Much of the time, legislators do not legislate.	Hines, 1951 Zeigler and Tucker, 1978 Iannacone and Lutz, 1970 Kerr, 1964
	2.8	Public opinion survey data show little public awareness of educational issues; and, many of the issues of most salience to the public is beyond the scope of school boards.	Mann, 1975 Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Zeigler and Tucker, 1978
	2.9	Board opinion and action more closely reflect elite and professional opinion than general public opinion.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Zeigler and Tucker, 1978
	2.10	Boards are least likely to express constituents' preferences with respects to how policy is to be made.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
3. Is electoral support the basis of power?	3.1	In the long run, elections do make a difference in that that contested elections lead to board and superintendent turnover.	Iannacone and Lutz, 1970
	3.2	The higher the level of electoral conflict, the greater the likelihood of board opposition to a superintendent.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Stelzer, 1975
	3.3	In the short run, routine elections do not transmit public policy preferences to decisionmakers.	Mitchell and Badarak, 1977 Kerr, 1964 Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974

CHART 4B (continued): INVENTORY OF PROPOSITIONS ON BOARD RESPONSIVENESS

QUESTION	PROPOSITION	SOURCE
	3.4 Elections provide citizens with a means to express reactive judgements rather than pro-active policy cues.	Rossell, 1975 Zeigler and Tucker, 1978 Stelzer, 1975
	3.5 Electoral conflict is rare rather than normal.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	3.6 Higher turnover does not necessarily mean electoral conflict nor does low turnout mean an absence of conflict.	Taebel, 1977 Rossell, 1975
4. Does it make any difference who serves on the board?	4.1 Board membership is demographically unrepresentative; skewed towards males, white and high status groups.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	4.1.1 Demographically more representative boards are not therefore more responsive.	Gittell, et al., 1979
	4.2 Boards do not attract politically active elites as much as other local legislative and rulemaking bodies do.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 McCarty and Ramsey, 1970
	4.3 Politician board members are more likely to be responsive.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 McCarty and Ramsey, 1970 Stelzer, 1975
Do different electoral arrangements lead to different kinds of members?	4.4 Appointed boards are no less responsive or representative than elected boards.	" "
	4.5 Politician-tupe board members are most likely to be found in unreformed districts, where there are partisan, ward-based elections	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	4.6 Nominating caucuses are most likely to produce non-politician candidates.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 McCArty and Ramsey, 1970

CHART 4B (continued): INVENTORY OF PROPOSITIONS ON BOARD RESPONSIVENESS

QUESTION	PROPOSITION	SOURCE
	4.7 Ward-based electoral arrangements lead to more superintendent-board conflict and to greater sensitivity to local neighborhood-based constituency interests.	Cibulka, 1978
	4.8 In unreformed districts, with partisan elections, there is more campaigning on educational issues and more electoral competition.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	Unreformed systems may have higher voter turnout.	Milton and Bicel, 1982
	4.9 Unreformed districts showed more board-constituent agreement on finance issues, although there was no difference on issues of race and governance.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	4.10 No evidence on whether lack of fiscal autonomy makes a difference.	" "
	4.11 When school elections are held at the same time as other local elections, there is higher turnout, more competition, more media attention and higher visibility for school issues.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Rossell, 1975 Kirby, et al., 1973 Gittell, et al., 1979
	4.12 A majority of boards showed a shifting pattern of coalition depending on the issue.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 McCarty and Ramsey, 1970
	4.13 Factional boards are most likely to exhibit opposition, the least likely to have a "professional-sacred" orientation, and are the most accessible.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	4.13.1 These factional boards are most likely to oppose the superintendent but are not likely to succeed.	" "
	4.14 Pluralistic boards are most likely to succeed in overruling a superintendent if opposition does occur.	" "

CHART 4B (continued): INVENTORY OF PROPOSITIONS ON BOARD RESPONSIVENESS

QUESTION		PROPOSITION	SOURCE
	4.15	Consensual boards are the least accessible and are the most likely to be deferential to the superintendent.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 McCarty and Ramsey, 1970
5. Are boards more responsive to some kinds of community groups rather than others?	5.1	"Internal" groups have more access than "external" groups.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Gittell, et al., 1979
	5.2	Among external groups, most contact was with ideological rather than non-ideological groups.	" "
	5.3	Class was more important than race in determining group access to school decisionmaking.	" "
	5.4	Internal groups were more likely than external groups to have access.	" "
	5.5	Boards were more apt to pay attention to citywide rather than neighborhood-based groups.	" "
6. Are boards more apt to be responsive on some issues rather than on others?	6.1	External issues are more likely to cause boards to assert their legislative supremacy and be more receptive to community input.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	6.2	There is more citizen activity leading to higher levels of community tension and conflict found to be associated with more board responsiveness, on external issues and on issues which have high visibility.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974 Gittell, et al., 1979
	6.3	There is more citizen-based agreement on policy substance than on policy about how policy is made.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974
	6.4	There is more responsiveness on citizens' service (i.e., "case") demands than on citizens' policy demands.	" "

CHART 4B (continued): INVENTORY OF PROPOSITIONS ON BOARD RESPONSIVENESS

QUESTION		PROPOSITION	SOURCE
	6.5	Redistributive policy issues are more likely to change a board from a sacred-professional to a secular-representational orientation.	Boyd, 1982
	6.6	Redistributive policy issues increase board opposition to administrative proposals.	Cilbulka, 1982
7. Are some ways of approaching the board likely to be more successful than others?	7.1	There is more responsiveness for service demand than for policy influence demands, and least for access to policy influence demand.	Zeigler and Tucker, 1978
	7.2	Superintendents get more, and respond to more service demand than do board members.	" "
	7.3	Superintendents are also more apt than boards to be responsive to demand for access to policy influence.	" "
	7.4	Even for policy demand, individual private contacts and public presentations receive more of a response from both boards and superintendents than do group demands presented in public meetings.	" "
	7.5	Boards which are more apt to be responsive to individual citizen demands are less likely to be responsive to citizens' group demands and vice versa.	Zeigler, Jennings and Peak, 1974

FIVE. WHAT DOES IT MEAN? IMPLICATIONS FOR CIVIC PRACTICE

We draw implications rather than conclusions, because this is a report on what is "out there" -- in the research literature. It is not a critical review or synthesis of that literature. Our methodology was not designed to arrive at any general conclusions. Our intent was not to arrive at a general assessment of whether school boards are responsive or not. Instead, our intent was to inventory and explicate that research evidence which, by providing clues about what actionable factors are associated with different kinds of board responsiveness, can guide and inform the practice of citizenship.

As we saw in Section Four, above, the evidence on some issues is lacking or contradictory. What we have is clues, and those clues suggest the following practical maxims for those wishing to "lobby" a board about how policy is made in order to make the policymaking process more responsive.*

(1) The perceived difficulties of getting access -- a hearing and a response -- are real, general and are not imagined. But this non-responsiveness is not ad-hominem, rather it is built into the culture and structure of school policymaking. (Sections 4.1 and 4.2.)

(2) Expect to have your response deflected from one "branch" to another -- from the board (the "legislative branch") to the superintendent (the "effective branch") and vice-versa. (Section 4.2.)

This buck-passing may be intended as a delaying tactic (it certainly may have this consequence) but not necessarily so. Once again, the behavior is not necessarily ad-hominem. It is just as likely to stem from unresolved ambiguities in "who

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* Where relevant, each "maxim" is indexed to a subsection of Section Four, which inventories the pertinent evidence.

governs" public schools. This is because for the most part, the "trustee" rather than "delegate" orientation of board members (stemming, in part, from their adoption of the "good government" model) leads them to defer to superintendents, giving the latter broad de facto but unspecified grants of legislative authority. But because these delegations and grants are de facto and unspecified, superintendents are not always sure when and if they are going to overstep their bounds and encroach upon issues which belong to the "board's prerogative."

(3) Lobby and work towards charter reforms producing institutional arrangements found to be associated, albeit weakly, with the presence of more board members who are apt to take on a delegate rather than a trustee role. These arrangements include: district rather than at-large representation; elections coinciding with general municipal elections, the presence of another government official (e.g. a mayor) as a member or chair of the school board; and partisan, or at least, slate and factional elections. (Section 4.4.)

(4) Where the above arrangements are not feasible, do not waste time lobbying for elected vs. appointive boards, and for fiscal dependence vs. fisal autonomy. By themselves neither of these factors have been found to be associated with more responsiveness. In fact, due to some special circumstances, evidence shows appointive boards to be, if anything, more responsive, than elected boards. (Section 4.5.)

(5) Where the charter reforms in point 3 are not practical, or for other special local reasons, undesirable, then work towards getting more delegate-oriented board members by supporting the election and selection of (a) single-issue candidates, (b) candidates with a definite neighborhood or constituency base; and (c) candidates with political ambitions, i.e. those whom you suspect are using school board office as a stepping stone in a political career. (Section 4.3.)

(6) Whether local circumstances and precedents dictate the presence of appointed or elected boards, consider advocating

one-time terms of service without the possibility of succession, in effect, creating a perpetual succession of lame duck school boards. Notwithstanding the conventional wisdom about the disadvantages of lame duck officeholding, research has shown that new members are more likely to have a delegate orientation, and that the longer they serve, the more likely it is that they will be socialized into the culture of trustee representation typical of long-time incumbents. Single-term membership may also attract candidates who wish to use the office of school board membership as a political stepping stone, and the evidence is that these kind of ambitious office-holders will show a more responsive, "politico" role orientation. (Section 4.4.)

In terms of the types of citizen information needs we raised in Section One, "introduction," point numbers 3 through 6, above, address the "what to lobby for" issue. Point numbers 7 through 14, below, address the "how-to-lobby" issue.

(7) When the structural charter reforms implied in points 3, 4 and 6 are impractical, and the electoral strategies suggested in point 5 are, for a variety of easily imagined local reasons, undesirable, then work within the system, whatever its institutional arrangements, and use a multi-level and multi-faceted approach. Research has shown that responsiveness is conceptually and empirically a multi-dimensional concept. In practical terms, this means that if a school system is not responsive to a particular way of packaging the demand, this does not mean that the system is totally unresponsive. (Section 3.)

(8) In seeking a response, contact both the legislative branch (the board) and executive branch (the superintendent).

(9) In making those contacts, use both formal, public presentations and individual contacts. Research has shown that taken alone, the least effective strategy is formal, public, interest group presentations at board meetings and hearings. (Section 4.7.)

(10) In making either individual or private contacts -- nominate parents to be the spokespersons of the group interest, and personalize the policy issue: i.e., even though a general

principle is at stake, illustrate the principle with a specific case and grievance involving a parent/citizen. (Section 4.7.)

(11) Also, in either case, present information in public and formal settings, and make requests/proposals in private contacts.

(12) Superintendents have more constituent contacts than board members, and are in general more responsive, especially on issues surrounding parent involvement. This knowledge may be useful if a policy decision (by the board) needs to be made to open the process to more citizen involvement. Since superintendents dominate and structure the agenda for board meetings, the best way to get boards to deal with the issue of citizen access is to first lobby the superintendent. (Section 4.7.)

(13) In contacting and lobbying the superintendent, expect to encounter the same role orientations which inhibit citizen access to and responsiveness from school boards: namely, a trustee rather than a delegate sense of responsibility to clients and constituents. Moreover, comparative studies of how school superintendents

superintendents vs. other public executive, e.g. city and town managers, deal with conflict show that superintendents are more likely to take a policy disagreement as a professional and personal challenge or affront. (Zeigler, et al., 1981.)

(14) Where the superintendent proves to be inaccessible and routinely unresponsive, work to defeat incumbent board members -- as an end in and of itself. Research shows that new boards are very likely to get a new superintendent, even when there are no clear policy or personality conflicts in evidence. Incumbent defeat is associated with higher levels of information about school board elections and/or (the variable are not interdependent) higher levels of turnout. (Section 4.3.)

A final note: We began this report with an apocryphal tale of a citizen or a citizen group raising policy issues at the school building level and being told that such matters are outside of the authority of school administrative staff, and should be properly taken up with the board.

This response is in perfect keeping with textbook ideals of

democracy in action. The research literature on "who governs", overviewed in Section Two, shows however that decisionmaking does not fit the textbook ideal. The evidence on the correlates of responsiveness inventoried in Section Four shows that boards can and are differentially responsive to certain kinds of contacts and requests, especially those dealing with cases rather than policies. Superintendents', on the other hand, are equally if not more accessible and are particularly more responsive to contacts about policy specifically policies to promote citizen access.

The short-term strategic import of this phenomenon has been discussed in point 12 in our discussion of the implications for citizens, above. The large implications seem equally interesting. We have here what looks like a complete reversal of the textbook ideal: the "executive branch" (superintendent) is comparatively more policy and legislatively responsive; while the "legislative branch" (the board) is more case and grievance responsive.

These data on case responsiveness reveal an important latent function of school boards: as ombudsmen, and as informal courts of appeal and grievance committees. Both scholarly and informal observers of school board proceedings report that "case work" occupies most of the agenda time in which boards do interact or react to the citizenry. Their significance has been undervalued because this latent function does not square with the textbook ideal of democracy (e.g., "school boards should govern or be abolished", Zeigler, 1973). Yet, the centrality of this latent ombudsman function can explain the apparent paradox, noted in Section Two above, that while scholarly critics find school boards falling far short of the democratic ideal, some public opinion poll data shows that the citizenry has comparatively more trust and legitimacy in school boards than in other "local legislatures," i.e., city and county schools, etc. (Cited in Salisbury, 1980.)

Whether the public is misguided and whether the ombudsman/

court of appeals function is "good" or "bad" are matters left to political and philosophical debate. Whether school boards are unique or different in their predominant focus on the ombsudman function is a matter for even more comparative research on boards and other local legislatures.

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